Recommendations related to Building Transportation Equipment during State and Province Re-Opening Efforts

INTRODUCTION

Everyone is trying to figure out the new "normal" in the era of Covid-19, and the elevator industry has fielded questions related to the use, cleaning and design of elevators and escalators within discussions about the types of services our industry can offer. One thing is certain: Transmission of the disease occurs when people are in close proximity to one another.

We also know that many routine tasks and others aspects of commerce have changed – people are queued six feet apart to check-out of retail stores, post offices, etc.; wearing masks is socially expected in public places; and sanitizing surfaces and surroundings has become a common practice.

The building transportation industry has the opportunity to shape the debate around the regulation and use of our equipment, and we need to take assertive action. In order to ensure the appropriate management of issues related to elevators and escalators and to assist states in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and related recovery, NEII is proposing the following:

COVID-19 RESPONSE and BEYOND (Long-term Recommendations)

Encourage the use of "touchless" phone and app-based systems so passengers can call elevators and/or select floors from a personal device through the internet **without a need to push the standard elevator buttons** from the lobbies or within the car.

- Jurisdictions should ensure all systems that provide users a method to call cars and/or select floors from a personal device (or other alternative means), including those that connect through the internet, can be utilized.

Adopt the most recent edition of the A17.1 model elevator code (ASME A17.1/CSA B44, *Safety Code for Elevators and Escalators*) so that the safest and most cost-effective standards are in place to support a strong economic recovery.

- Jurisdictions following older versions of A17.1 are encouraged to update their elevator code to the most recent edition (2019).
- Adopting the most recent code will significantly reduce the number of variances that may be needed each year. Variances add costs and delays, many of which can be avoided by adopting the most recent codes.
- Manufacturers design to the most recent code nationally. Building owners benefit from the economies of scale by purchasing these pre-engineered models, as well as the on-time installation of standard elevators rather than devoting resources to troubleshooting changes specific to any one jurisdiction.

Allow elevator companies to self-attest to the completion of specific work identified by inspectors during annual and other required inspections.

- Jurisdictions across the U.S. and Canada face challenges managing increasing workloads with limited resources.
- Deficiencies identified during annual inspections are often related to non-life-safety items, many of which are minor such as elevator button lights, etc.
- Self-attestations related to the completion of the work related to items such as these will reduce the time inspectors dedicate to re-inspections, freeing resources for the completion of annual and other required inspections.
    - Spot-checks can be done to confirm compliance, or self-attested items can be verified during the next scheduled inspection.
- Citizens need to be confident that all elevators will be inspected every year, especially when equipment will be returned to service after being idle or shut-down during the COVID-19 Stay-at-Home orders. Some, if not all, will be operating under different conditions and/or be modified moving forward in response to measures aimed at responding to the pandemic.

Implement video inspections to reduce the need for inspectors to travel to multiple sites.

- Elevator service companies have utilized video inspections in various jurisdiction across the U.S. effectively amid restricted operations during the COVID-19 Stay-at-Home era.
- Inspectors can perform on-site inspections if specific issues are identified during the video inspection or other factors deem it necessary.
- Moving forward through re-opening and beyond, video inspections allow jurisdictions to maximize resources without compromising safety.
- Video inspections can also reduce the need for inspectors to travel to various locations and interact with numerous people, reducing the risk and spread of COVID-19 for inspectors, elevator personnel and others.

COVID-19 RESPONSE for BUILDING OWNERS (Short-term Recommendations)

As part of the detailed risk assessment **and site-specific protection plans** required by most, if not all re-opening efforts, building owners and managers **should have a section specifically related to building transportation equipment** to be followed for a specific length of time and discontinued thereafter.

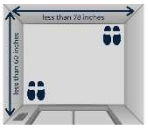
The following recommendations are components of a multi-factored approach within site-specific protection plans. Specific measures may or may not be adopted depending on requirements, considerations or circumstances.

NOTE: NEII is not a healthcare expert. Its recommendations are based on currently available guidance from the CDC and other authorities. NEII is not making any claim or representation that any of these measures will prevent the spread of COVID-19 or any other virus or disease. These recommendations are subject to change as more information about COVID-19 becomes known.

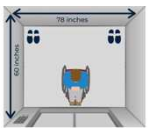
A. Implement physical distancing protocols in elevators. Each site will need to review the size of its cars and number of elevators in a bank to assess distancing between passengers.

Examples include:

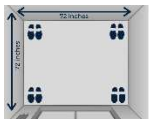
- 2500# cars: no more than two people in opposite corners.



- 3000# & 3500# cars: no more than three people with two in back corners and one in center by door.



- Larger service cars (which may have limited access by the public) greater than 72”x 72” can accommodate four.



- These guidelines were developed based on the “standard” dimensions of elevator cars and are not appropriate in all circumstances. All factors should be considered when determining the appropriate number of persons per elevator, including what other preventative measures are being utilized at the location.

B. Implement physical distancing protocols in escalators.
   - At least four steps should remain empty in between passengers.

C. Employ other passenger traffic control measures, such as:
   - Markings on lobby floors and/or in elevator cars and escalator steps.
   - Stanchions (for lobbies only; not recommended for use inside cars)

D. Communicate information to passengers and building tenants.
   - Signage plan for content and placement.
   - Other.

E. Outline cleaning methods, products and frequency recommendations for each elevator car, escalator railing and all the call buttons.

F. Utilize other measures to comply with current CDC guidance, including but not limited to:
   - Face masks and other coverings.
   - Sanitizer stations.
   - Staggered arrivals, departures and break times of workers and tenants.

G. Consider additional measures as long they meet all applicable codes, laws and regulations, and they do not restrict accessibility, create unsafe conditions, or hinder performance of the elevators and/or escalators.

   Examples include:
   - Supplemental air ventilation for elevator cars and elsewhere in the building.
   - Destination dispatch systems* to increase efficiencies of elevator rides and reduce time spent in elevator cars.
   - Alternative floors selection options (i.e., “no touch” screens, foot pedals, etc.).
   - Additional elevators.

   NOTE: The measures outlined under “G” can be either short-term or long-term solutions. Building owners or others interested in exploring these measures (or others) should discuss options with their elevator service companies.